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ABSTRACT

A questionnaire (appended) was administered to a sample of elementary and secondary teachers in Tennessee in three consecutive years to analyze the effects of negotiated contracts on teachers' attitudes toward job satisfaction, interpersonal trust, organizational commitment, and career satisfaction. The findings include a decline in the opinion that longer service guarantees better teaching, and in commitment to teaching as well as an increase in willingness to consider alternative employment and in the view that professionally negotiated contracts are a necessity for all teachers. Over the three-year period, there was a significant increase in the number of teachers who considered themselves "labor" and considered the administration "management" and who felt they would prepare for a different career if they were beginning college again. The authors decline to draw general implications from the data and suggest that their value lies in considering each questionnaire item separately. (Author/WD)

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A STUDY OF PROFESSIONAL ATTITUDES OF TEACHERS IN THE CUMBERLAND COUNTY AND PUTNAM COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEMS IN TENNESSEE

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A STUDY OF PROFESSIONAL ATTITUDES OF TEACHERS
IN THE CUMBERLAND COUNTY AND PUTNAM COUNTY
PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEMS IN TENNESSEE
BEFORE AND AFTER PROFESSIONAL NEGOTIATION

Statement of the Problem

This study compared teacher attitudes in the Cumberland and Putnam County, Tennessee, public school systems before and after professional negotiation. The comparisons were made to determine the attitudes of classroom teachers toward job satisfaction, interpersonal trust, organizational commitment and career satisfaction. The teachers in Cumberland County High School and Putnam County High School negotiated contracts through their professional associations with the respective boards of education for the 1979-80 and 1980-81 school years. The data for this study cover the 1978-79, 1979-80 and 1980-81 school years.

Significance of the Study

The significance of this study is that it provides insights into the effects of professional negotiation upon the professional attitudes of teachers. Teachers' attitudes in the school systems are compared over a three-year period to determine if the process of professional negotiation causes teachers to have different professional attitudes than they had before professional negotiations.

Research Procedures

The research design for this study consisted of the development of a questionnaire concerning teachers' attitudes toward job satisfaction, interpersonal trust, organizational commitment, and career satisfaction. Questionnaires were administered to samples of classroom teachers in the public schools

of Cumberland and Putnam Counties, Tennessee, in the autumn of 1978. The samples consisted of teachers at Cumberland County High School in Crossville and Putnam County High School in Cookeville. This was before either of these school systems had become involved in professional negotiations between the local teacher's associations and the boards of education, respectively.

The questionnaire was administered to the classroom teachers of Cumberland County High School and Putnam County High School during the autumns of both 1979 and 1980. The data from the three administrations of the questionnaires were tabulated and analyzed to determine comparisons among the school systems before and after professional negotiations. The "Statistical Package for the Social Sciences" program was used for computer analysis of the data.

Summary of Results

The tabulated data on the 16 questionnaire items are presented below followed by a brief analysis:

1. I believe that the longer a teacher has taught, the better the teacher is.

	Cumberland			Putnam		
	1978	1979	1980	1978	1979	1980
Agree	48.5	59.3	45.8	54.3	72.5	48.7
Disagree	51.5	40.7	50.0	45.7	27.5	35.9
No Opinion			4.2			15.4

In Cumberland County there was a drop of 13.5 percent from 1979 to 1980 in the percentage of teachers agreeing that the longer a teacher has taught the better the teacher is. In Putnam County the decline was 23.8 percent.

2. I feel my fellow teachers are supporting my efforts in the classroom.

	Cumberland			Putnam		
	1978	1979	1980	1978	1979	1980
Agree	85.8	88.9	92.6	91.7	95.1	82.5
Disagree	14.3	11.1	3.7	8.4	4.8	7.4
No Opinion			3.7			10.0

The comparisons for Cumberland County and Putnam County do not show a great deal of change for this questionnaire item from 1978 to 1980. It can be noted that the agree figure for Putnam County declined 12.6 percent from 1979 to 1980.

3. I consider myself part of a professional team which includes the principal.

	Cumberland			Putnam		
	1978	1979	1980	1978	1979	1980
Agree	80.0	96.3	100.0	97.2	97.6	92.5
Disagree	20.0	3.7	0.0	2.8	2.4	5.0
No Opinion			0.0			2.5

It can be noted that in 1980 in Cumberland County the teachers agreed on this item 100 percent. The percentage of teachers agreeing in Putnam County declined slightly in 1980 from both 1978 and 1979.

4. I worry less and have less anxiety about my teaching now than ever before.

	Cumberland			Putnam		
	1978	1979	1980	1978	1979	1980
Agree	51.5	48.1	53.6	48.6	51.2	47.4
Disagree	48.6	51.8	35.7	51.3	48.8	42.1
No Opinion			10.7			10.5

The percentage of teachers agreeing on this item from 1978 to 1980 in both Cumberland and Putnam Counties was about the same.

5. I feel more committed to teaching today than ever before.

	Cumberland			Putnam		
	1978	1979	1980	1978	1979	1980
Agree	68.5	62.9	53.6	77.8	77.5	47.4
Disagree	31.5	37.0	39.3	22.2	22.5	39.5
No Opinion				7.1		13.2

The percentage of teachers agreeing on this questionnaire item in Putnam County declined 30.4 percent from 1978 to 1980 and 30.1 percent from 1979 to 1980. In Cumberland County there was a decline of 9.3 percent from 1979 to 1980.

6. I would not be happy in any job other than teaching.

	Cumberland			Putnam		
	1978	1979	1980	1978	1979	1980
Agree	44.1	58.1	53.6	36.1	25.0	15.8
Disagree	58.9	51.8	39.3	63.9	75.0	63.2
No Opinion			7.1			21.0

The change in the disagree percentages from 1978 to 1980 for Cumberland County reflects a 19.6 decline. In Putnam County the "agree" responses indicate a 9.2 percent decrease in 1980 over 1979.

7. A good teacher doesn't need professional negotiations to reduce the problems of classroom instruction.

	Cumberland			Putnam		
	1978	1979	1980	1978	1979	1980
Agree	25.7	22.2	34.5	22.2	20.0	15.8
Disagree	74.3	77.7	48.3	77.8	80.0	63.2
No Opinion			17.2			21.0

In Cumberland County the teachers' "disagree" responses showed a 29.4 percent decline from 1979 to 1980. In Putnam County there was a decline of 16.8 percent in the "disagree" column.

8. My principal does things which interfere with my regular classroom activities.

	Cumberland			Putnam		
	1978	1979	1980	1978	1979	1980
Agree	45.7	29.6	16.0	8.4	9.8	17.1
Disagree	54.3	70.3	64.0	91.7	90.3	73.2
No Opinion			20.0			9.7

In Cumberland County from 1978 to 1980, the percentage of agreement dropped 29.7 percent. Also, there were 20 percent of the participants who responded "no opinion."

9. I feel I can trust my principal's advice.

	Cumberland			Putnam		
	1978	1979	1980	1978	1979	1980
Agree	87.5	92.3	74.1	88.8	92.5	92.3
Disagree	28.6	7.6	14.8	11.1	7.5	0.0
No Opinion			11.1			7.7

The data show that the percentage of teachers who felt they could trust their principal's advice decreased 18.2 percent from 1979 to 1980 in Cumberland County.

During the same period in Putnam County the decline was only .2 percent.

10. The longer a teacher teaches the more money the teacher should receive.

	Cumberland			Putnam		
	1978	1979	1980	1978	1979	1980
Agree	82.3	80.8	74.1	81.0	89.8	92.3
Disagree	17.6	19.2	14.8	18.9	10.3	7.7
No Opinion			11.1			0.0

There is little change from 1978 to 1980 on this questionnaire item.

11. I consider myself "labor," and the administration, "management."

	Cumberland			Putnam		
	1978	1979	1980	1978	1979	1980
Agree	31.4	50.0	84.0	13.5	25.0	84.6
Disagree	68.6	50.0	8.0	86.5	75.0	7.7
No Opinion			8.0			7.7

In Cumberland County from 1978 to 1980, 52.6 percent more of the teachers said they considered themselves "labor" and the administration "management." In Putman County during the same time some 71.1 percent more of the teachers agreed that they considered themselves "labor" and the administration "management."

12. If I were beginning college study again, I would prepare for teaching.

	Cumberland			Putnam		
	1978	1979	1980	1978	1979	1980
Agree	72.1	53.8	26.9	72.2	63.2	22.5
Disagree	27.9	46.2	57.7	27.7	46.9	17.5
No Opinion			15.4			60.0

It can be determined from the data that 45.2 percent fewer of the teachers in Cumberland County and 49.7 percent fewer of the teachers in Putnam County agreed that if they were beginning college study again they would prepare for teaching in 1980 than in 1978.

13. I don't like working with parents.

	Cumberland			Putnam		
	1978	1979	1980	1978	1979	1980
Agree	2.9	11.1	7.4	2.7	9.7	5.0
Disagree	97.1	88.9	74.1	97.3	90.3	82.5
No Opinion			18.5			12.5

There were no major changes in opinion from 1978 to 1980.

14. As a teacher I feel I must do things that the principal really should do.

	Cumberland			Putnam		
	1978	1979	1980	1978	1979	1980
Agree	38.8	7.4	8.0	8.8	7.5	7.3
Disagree	61.3	92.6	88.0	91.2	92.5	82.9
No Opinion			4.0			9.6

In Cumberland County from 1978 to 1980 there was a decrease in the number of teachers that felt they must do things that the principal really should do. Some 30.8 percent fewer of the teachers agreed with the statement in 1980 than in 1978. In Putnam County the percentages were about the same from 1978 to 1980.

15. I work actively with my department or grade level for its concerns.

	Cumberland			Putnam		
	1978	1979	1980	1978	1979	1980
Agree	94.2	85.2	88.9	97.2	97.5	95.0
Disagree	5.7	14.8	0.0	2.8	2.5	5.0
No Opinion			11.1			0.0

There were no major changes from 1978 to 1980. In Cumberland County no respondents marked "disagree," however, 11.1 percent indicated "no opinion."

16. I wish I were teaching somewhere else.

	Cumberland			Putnam		
	1978	1979	1980	1978	1979	1980
Agree	8.8	7.4	3.6	5.4	2.9	5.3
Disagree	91.2	92.6	89.3	94.5	97.1	84.2
No Opinion			7.1			10.5

It can be noted on this item that there is little difference in the percentages from 1978 to 1980 in Cumberland County or in Putnam County.

It seems difficult and subjective to make general, overall judgements concerning the data. Perhaps the greatest value of the study is in the consideration of the data separately by each questionnaire item.

APPENDIX

We're in the final phase of the three year research on teacher attitude. We have appreciated your help so far. Would you for the last time please indicate your preferences by checking the columns on the right.

Thank you
Dr. Thomas Reddick

		Agree	No Opinion	Disagree
1.	Sex (1) Male (2) Female			
2.	Age (1) 21-24 (2) 25-28 (3) 29-38 (4) 39-up			
3.	Teaching level: (1) K-3 (2) 4-6 (3) 7-9 (4) 10-12 (5) other			
4.	Years of experience in this system: (1) first year (2) 1-3 years (3) 3-10 years (4) more than 10 years			
5.	Member of: (1) United Teaching Profession (2) American Federation of Teachers (3) or none			
6.	Tenure (1) yes (2) no			
7.	Percent of income contributed to support of household: (1) less than 30% (2) more than 30% (3) less than 60% (4) more than 60%			
8.	I believe that the longer a teacher has taught, the better the teacher is.			
9.	I feel my fellow teachers are supporting my efforts in the classroom.			
10.	I consider myself part of a professional team which includes the principal.			
11.	I worry less and have less anxiety about my teaching now than ever before.			
12.	I feel more committed to teaching today than ever before.			
13.	I would not be happy in any job other than teaching.			
14.	A good teacher doesn't need professional negotiations to reduce the problems of classroom instruction.			

	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree
15. My principal does things which interfere with my regular classroom activities.			
16. I feel I can trust my principal's advice.			
17. The longer a teacher teaches the more money the teacher should receive.			
18. I consider myself "labor" and the administration "management".			
19. If I were beginning college study again, I would prepare for teaching.			
20. I don't like working with parents.			
21. As a teacher I feel I must do things that the principal really should do.			
22. I work actively with my department or grade level for its concerns.			
23. I wish I were teaching somewhere else.			